

One of the lynchpins of any start-up democracy and one of the points of pride of any independent government is a free press. To allow any large organization to take over the bulk of any media is a threat not just to individual freedoms, but to our very form of government.

This apparently simple act has far-reaching consequences.

Sinclair Broadcast Group's recent actions have illustrated the dangers to localism caused by media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.